

**SUMMARY OF THE  
EIGHTH INTERIM MEETING OF THE  
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ACCREDITATION CONFERENCE  
NOVEMBER 18 - 21, 2002**

**INTRODUCTION**

The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) held its Eighth Interim Meeting, NELAC 8i, November 18-21, 2002 at the La Fonda Hotel (on the Plaza) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The meeting was co-sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), and the New Mexico Environmental Health Association (NMEHA). There were approximately 240 attendees at the meeting.

The meeting opened with a plenary session in which perspectives on NELAC and the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) were reviewed. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Gary King, formerly a candidate for the office of Governor of New Mexico and currently an attorney in private practice specializing in environmental issues. After the opening plenary session, a plenary session of the NELAC Program Policy and Structure and Transition Committees was held to facilitate discussion of issues pertinent to the reorganization of NELAC. Open concurrent committee meeting sessions were then held, followed by a closing plenary session in which committee reports on highlights and substantive issues, future plans, and unresolved issues from the open committee meetings were presented to all attendees. The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) also met in conjunction with NELAC 8i.

Participants received meeting materials at check-in, including a detailed agenda and copies of proposed changes for each of the chapters in the NELAC Standard (dated November 18, 2002). The registrant's packet also included a one-page agenda, a copy of the complete NELAC Constitution, Bylaws, and Standard (dated October 8, 2002), a list of ground rules for the meeting, and an ELAB booklet containing general Federal Advisory Committee information, a copy of ELAB's July 2001 EPA charter, and a tabular summary of ELAB's recommendations from February 6, 1997, until June 28, 2000. Additional materials included in the registrant's packet or available at the NELAC registration desk included area maps and hotel information, a conference evaluation form, and an announcement for the Ninth NELAC Annual Meeting (NELAC 9) to be held in June 2003.

Registrants included representatives of local and county government, representatives of state and territorial government, representatives of EPA headquarters programs and regional offices, and representatives of other federal government organizations. Private-sector participants included representatives from environmental testing laboratories, representatives from laboratory accreditation organizations and environmental interest groups, representatives from industry, consultants, and representatives or researchers from academia.

**OPENING PLENARY SESSION**

**Comments from Ms. Jeanne Hankins**

NELAC 8i was opened by Ms. Jeanne Hankins, NELAP Director. She welcomed attendees and introduced the NELAC Board of Directors (BoD) and committee chairs. Members of the BoD included Dr. Paul Kimsey (Chair), Mr. Wayne Davis (Chair-Elect), Ms. Sylvia Labie (Past-Chair), Mr. Edward Kantor (Acting Executive Secretary), Ms. Ann Marie Allen, Mr. Thomas Maloney, Mr. Richard Sheibley, Ms. Aurora Shields, Mr. Joseph Slayton, and Mr. Gleason Wheatley. Committee chairs included Dr. Kenneth Jackson (Program Policy and Structure), Ms. RaeAnn Haynes (Proficiency Testing), Mr. Alfredo

Sotomayor (On-site Assessment), Ms. Susan Wyatt (Accreditation Process), Mr. David Mendenhall (Quality Systems), Dr. Barton Simmons (Field Activities), Mr. Kevin Coats (Regulatory Coordination), Ms. Sherry Clay (Membership and Outreach), Ms. Sylvia Labie (Nominating), Mr. Matthew Caruso (National Database), and Mr. Wayne Davis (Transition).

Ms. Hankins briefly reviewed meeting logistics. She noted that a plenary session for the NELAC Program Policy and Structure and Transition Committees would be held, just as at NELAC 8. She also noted that an Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) meeting would be held the following day and that INELA had contracted/co-sponsored with the State of California to host NELAC 9 in San Diego. Finally, Ms. Hankins encouraged attendees to participate in the open committee meeting sessions.

### **Comments from NMED NELAC Meeting Coordinator**

Dr. Paul Kimsey, NELAC Chair, introduced Ms. Barbara Giesler of the NMED. Ms. Giesler, who had served as New Mexico's lead in coordinating the meeting, welcomed attendees to New Mexico and Santa Fe. She recognized her assistant, Ms. Marie Ortiz and the meeting's audio technician, Mr. Ross Palmer, both of NMED, for their efforts in organizing and implementing NELAC 8i. She also thanked the staffs of EPA, RTI, NMED, and NMEHA for their support in organizing and implementing NELAC 8i. Ms. Giesler announced that the next scheduled speaker, Mr. John D'Antonio, Jr., Secretary NMED, had been unable to attend the meeting because he was engaged in transition team activities arising from the election of a new New Mexico Governor. In his place, she introduced NMED Bureau Chief Dr. James Davis.

### **Welcome from NMED**

Dr. Davis also welcomed attendees to New Mexico. He provided some descriptive statistics about the NELAC 8i attendees, noting that registrants included representatives from California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, the Cherokee Nation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Navy, several EPA regions and EPA headquarters, the U.S. Geologic Survey, several cities, private laboratories, and consulting firms. Dr. Davis noted that all are "information merchants" dealing in environmental data. The value of the data is directly proportional to its quality. Since policy and decisions are based on data, confidence in data quality results in confidence in the decisions based on that data. Dr. Davis ended his opening remarks by stating once again that he was proud of Ms. Giesler for the successful meeting kick-off. He offered a final welcome to New Mexico and his best wishes for a successful meeting.

### **Keynote Address**

Ms. Giesler introduced the meeting's keynote speaker, Dr. Gary King. She noted that Dr. King is an attorney in private practice of law specializing in environmental issues. Holding a BS degree in chemistry, a PhD in organic chemistry, and a JD, Dr. King has a long and distinguished history in environmental law, advising public policy on environmental management, and service to the environmental community. He was a member of the NELAC BoD from its inception until 1996. Dr. King served six terms in the New Mexico House of Representatives and was a candidate for New Mexico governor in 1998 and 2002.

Dr. King announced that he was happy to be back at NELAC, having worked with Ms. Hankins in NELAC's infancy. He then turned to talk of politics, noting that he had withdrawn from the 2002 New Mexico governor's race before the primary. Dr. King withdrew from the race because it would have required negative political advertisements to overtake his opponent, who was ahead in the polls. Dr. King respected his opponent and refused to run a negative campaign. He pointed to this situation as an

example of a problem with the American political system. Politicians spend time eroding confidence in their opponents, thereby eroding confidence in our elected officials. Erosion of confidence is a serious issue in the private sector, as well. Laboratories provide an important public service. The public needs to know that they can trust environmental data to ensure the quality of their air, water, and food. Dr. King noted that NELAC is working to ensure public confidence in environmental data even though NELAC does not receive a lot of public recognition. Dr. King noted that chemical and biological issues will be increasingly important in the coming years. He also noted that states are first responders and that state laboratories must be able to deal with interesting issues in uncertain times. Stressing that it is important in these times of diminishing resources to ensure that environmental data can be trusted, Dr. King closed by congratulating NELAC on the work it has done in this area and encouraging NELAC to move forward.

### **Remarks from EPA Concerning Agency's Position on NELAC**

Dr. Kimsey introduced Dr. Henry Longest II, Deputy Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Research and Development, who reviewed EPA's position on NELAC. Dr. Longest stressed that data quality is important for anyone responsible for making and implementing environmental decisions. He noted that the importance of data quality was underscored last year by federal legislation requiring that all agencies take steps to ensure the transparency, objectivity, and suitability of the data they use and disseminate. EPA Information Quality Guidelines hold the Agency to new standards of accountability.

Dr. Longest stated that EPA is supportive of efforts to establish a national environmental laboratory accreditation system. A strong accreditation system that ensures laboratory competency is an important component of efforts to solve environmental problems and may have a number of benefits, including:

- Improving the level of laboratory staff expertise as a result of establishing minimum education, training, and experience standards;
- Ensuring that laboratories have suitable quality systems and that the systems are operating;
- Reducing accreditation costs for both laboratories and state accreditation programs;
- Bringing consistency to state accreditation programs;
- Helping to eliminate incompetent laboratories; and
- Assisting purchasers of laboratory services to find competent laboratories to do their work.

Dr. Longest stressed that for these potential benefits to be made reality, it is critical to have a truly national system with reciprocity between states, the federal government, and tribal nations. EPA continues to support NELAC by encouraging increased staff participation in the standard-setting process and by supporting NELAC financially. Dr. Longest stated that EPA will also work to increase support for the NELAC program in non-NELAC states and that Dr. Paul Gilman will take the lead in this effort.

Dr. Longest noted that there are still areas in which EPA would like to see modifications in NELAC. He stressed that NELAC needs to ensure the full participation of federal agencies, states, commercial laboratories, engineering firms, and purchasers or users of environmental services and data. Standards should be developed by groups representing and including all sectors of the environmental community. Dr. Longest stated that EPA believes that laboratory accreditation is not inherently a governmental function. EPA also believes that accrediting its own laboratories would be a conflict of interest and, therefore, is looking to have states or other bodies accredit them. Consequently, EPA is pleased with the reorganization of NELAC. EPA believes that NELAC should reconsider the role of non-governmental bodies in standard-setting. Dr. Longest urged NELAC to consider letting *all* stakeholders be involved in approving standards and letting appropriate third-party organizations serve as accreditation authorities.

Dr. Longest indicated that NELAC should become self-sufficient over time and its funding sources should be broad-based. He indicated that EPA will provide a significant level of financial and technical

staff support to the program. He also indicated that EPA will establish a grants program within the next few months to help consensus standard-setting organizations.

Dr. Longest recommended a move from a method-based system to a performance-based system. Such a system should focus on ensuring that the laboratory:

- Has a well designed quality system;
- Follows its quality system;
- Meets the data quality needs of the “customer” or the particular application for which the work is being performed; and
- Generates data of known and documented quality.

Dr. Longest indicated that continued progress in this area is critical. It will be the deciding factor in EPA’s decision to provide continuing financial support. Dr. Longest also urged NELAC to reevaluate its current “fields of accreditation” system, since the method-based approach is an impediment to implementing the performance-based approach.

### **Remarks from the Chair**

Dr. Kimsey welcomed participants to New Mexico and Santa Fe. He thanked members of the NMED and NMEHA staff, especially Ms. Giesler, for the superb job they had done in organizing the meeting and attending to the many details.

Dr. Kimsey noted that INELA has made a strong start towards becoming a standards development organization. He reminded attendees of the successful partnership between the states and the EPA, noting that renewed support from the Office of Water and a recent letter of support from the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) is a testament to the reorganized NELAC program. Dr. Kimsey suggested that NELAC provides a focal point for the states to understand their changing roles in their partnership with EPA and its programs. In return, EPA’s technical and administrative leadership in NELAC has provided the Agency with a single venue in which to work through tough issues as its programs’ laboratory needs have evolved. Dr. Kimsey also suggested that this continued leadership will be critical to the long-term success of NELAC. Noting that the states need strong leadership, Dr. Kimsey stated that EPA’s strong role as arbitrator of last resort ensures that states are not in conflict with each other and provides a stable national regulatory program.

Dr. Kimsey noted that the evolution of NELAC continues with the retirement of Ms. Hankins after 18 years with EPA. He expressed many thanks to Ms. Hankins for her contributions to the program. Dr. Kimsey then adjourned the opening plenary session with a reminder that the meeting would reconvene after lunch in a plenary session of the NELAC Program Policy and Structure and Transition Committees to continue the discussion on the new NELAC Bylaws.

### **COMMITTEE WORKING SESSIONS**

For two and a half days following the opening plenary session, concurrent working sessions involving all standing, administrative, and *ad hoc* committees were held. Highlights and substantive issues from each working session, future plans, and principal unresolved issues (and time frames for addressing them, if defined) are listed below as presented in the meeting’s closing plenary session. In keeping with the goals established for the meeting, all working sessions were of an open-forum format; a session typically included committee members, Federal and state representatives, as well as representatives from laboratories, accrediting organizations, industry, and the general public. Comprehensive meeting minutes are presented under separate cover.

## **Program Policy & Structure – Chair: Dr. Kenneth Jackson**

### Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- Reached general agreement on proposed language for the amendment of articles of the NELAC Constitution and Bylaws withheld from vote at NELAC 8 regarding the Executive Director of NELAP and NELAC (Constitution: Article IV, Section 1A and B, and Bylaws: Article V, Section 4 and 5).
- Received constructive comments on proposed Section 1.7 (Chapter 1) regarding the way NELAC deals with new standards.

### Future Plans:

- Finalize amendments of the Constitution and Bylaws for vote at NELAC 9.
- Revise Chapter 1 for consistency with the new Constitution and Bylaws for vote at NELAC 9 for immediate implementation.

### Unresolved Issues:

- Requirements of a standards development organization
  - Should a standards development organization meet the requirements of Office of Management and Budget Circular OMB A-119 ("Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities") or are these requirements too onerous?
  - Should the requirements be defined in Chapter 1?

## **Transition – Chair: Mr. Wayne Davis**

### Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- Develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) associated with the transition of NELAC to a standards adoption organization and to post the FAQ on the NELAC websites as soon as possible.
- Considered the feasibility of a “coordination committee” to address the standards development process (requirements, time frames, etc.) associated with the development of standards and host an open forum for issues of joint interest. (The development of a “coordination committee” would involve the transition from *ad hoc* committee status to standing committee status.)

### Future Plans:

- Consider the ramifications of incorporating by reference standards developed by other recognized standards development organizations into the NELAC Standard. (Mr. Davis noted that one of the issues raised in the committee’s working session was copyright infringements on existing standards.)
- Work with the NELAC BoD, approved accrediting authorities, and the regulated community concerning improvement in the professional regard of the NELAC accreditation process.

### Unresolved Issues:

- Training to address issues of consistency with regard to the NELAC Standard. The committee will continue to evaluate the availability, location, and costs associated with needed NELAC training courses. (Mr. Davis pointed out that NELAC is a young organization and has made progress in regard to training.)

## **Proficiency Testing (PT) – Chair: Ms. RaeAnn Haynes**

### Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- Oversight criteria for PT Providers.
- FAQ to meet matrix/method/analyte Fields of Testing (FOT) in 2003. (Ms. Haynes indicated that the committee may work with the Transition Committee on this issue.)

Future Plans:

- Expansion of PT FOT for Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) analyses.
- Requirement for preparation method reporting.
- Developing statistical methods to monitor PT studies.

Unresolved Issues:

- PT Database (Ms. Haynes noted that the PT Committee considers the database a necessary element for oversight of PT providers and to expand PT FOT.)
  - Sponsor
  - Funding source
  - Requirements

**On-site Assessment – Chair: Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor**

Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- Glossary definitions.
  - Findings
  - Deficiencies
  - Observations
- Results of assessors' electronic forum pilot available at the following forum website:  
<http://www.clu-in.org/confit/tio/assessorsforum/>.
- Corrective action in response to assessment reports. (Mr. Sotomayor noted that this issue had also been discussed in the Transition Committee plenary.)

Future Plans:

- Revise definitions of findings, deficiencies, and observations for presentation for vote at NELAC 9.
- Explore ways for convening additional electronic forums for assessors.
- Collaborate with Accreditation Process Committee to clarify and strengthen corrective action requirements in NELAC Standard.
- Complete committee transition to INELA.
- Publish 2001 version of Chapter 5 quality systems checklist.

Unresolved Issues:

- Technical experience requirements for assessors.
- Requirements for submitting assessors' conflict of interest forms to laboratories.
- Time lines for grand fathering of assessors in new accrediting authorities.
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**Accreditation Process – Chair: Ms. Susan Wyatt**

Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- Merging/splitting of laboratory accreditations.
- Due process for appeals from accredited laboratories.
- Corrective action reports in response to on-site assessment.

Future Plans:

- Restructuring of chapter contents. (Ms. Wyatt noted that the current contents of the Accreditation Process chapter of the NELAC Standard are not in the chronological order for the processing of applications.)
- Review of chapter contents to ensure consistency with the other chapters of the NELAC Standard.

Unresolved Issues:

- Development of a standard for the merging/splitting of laboratory accreditations.
- Identifying the appropriate place within the chapter to place the merging/splitting standard language and Section 4.8 (“Enforcement”). (Ms. Wyatt noted that the committee is uncertain of the history surrounding this issue and whether it is still appropriate for the Accreditation Process chapter of the NELAC Standard.)

**Quality Systems – Chair: Mr. David Mendenhall**

Highlights and substantive issues:

- Performance-Based Measurement System (PBMS) presentation.
  - Integration into the body of Chapter 5 and its Appendices B, C, and D.
- Radiochemical testing
- Auditable language
- Toxicity testing
- ISO language fine-tuning

Future Plans:

- More input for “PBMS.” (Mr. Mendenhall noted that the quotation marks are intentional, as he is still not sure what stakeholders mean and want when they refer to “PBMS.” He assured attendees that comments are welcome anytime.)
  - Comments due to chair by December 31, 2002.
  - Proposed two-day meeting in January.
- Activate subcommittee for radiochemical testing.
- Implementation plan for PBMS.
  - Who takes ownership?
  - What will implementation plan entail?

Unresolved Issues:

- Radiochemical testing, Section D.4.
- Implementation guide for “PBMS.” (Mr. Mendenhall noted that the committee considers PBMS to be an active issue rather than an unresolved issue.)

**Accrediting Authority – Chair: Mr. Louis Johnson**

Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- In-depth discussion of time line issues surrounding evaluation of accrediting authorities, both initial and renewal applications.
- Discussion regarding the use of “recommendations” in the evaluations of accrediting authorities.
- Make-up of the evaluation team. (Mr. Johnson noted that the time line discussion had raised the issue of staffing problems.)
  - Must the lead evaluator be an EPA employee?
  - Can the lead evaluator be a state representative?

Future Plans:

- Develop checklists for evaluating assessors.
- Propose language to modify time lines.
- Review proposed language for Section 6.3.3.1.3 b) 10 (“whistle blower” language for the report of unethical or improper laboratory or assessor practices).

Unresolved Issues:

- Make-up and roles of evaluation team members.

### **Field Activities – Chair: Dr. Bart Simmons**

Highlights and substantive issues:

- Transition tasks: accomplishments and priorities for NELAC for Field Activities.
- Definition of field measurement.
- Proposed changes to Chapter 7, checklist for audits, cross-reference matrix for ISO standards.
- Consistency with other chapters of the NELAC Standard.
  - Redundancy issue.
  - Role of guidance documents.

Future Plans:

- Review definition of field measurement.
- Review applicability of other chapters.
- Revise proposed changes to Chapter 7.
- Prepare accomplishments and priorities for NELAC.

Unresolved Issues:

- Redundancy and applicability of other chapters. (Dr. Simmons noted that the committee would seek help from the Transition Committee on this issue).
- Implementation issues for field sampling and measurement standards (e.g. differences between auditors).
- Schedule for requiring geopositional data. (Dr. Simmons noted that the committee will strengthen language on geopositional data for sample collection.)
- Sources of future proposed standards.

### **Regulatory Coordination – Chair: Mr. Kevin Coats**

Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- Committee responsibilities - current and future. (Mr. Coats noted that this topic of discussion was an addition to the pre-published agenda resulting from an earlier discussion with Mr. Jerry Parr of INELA.)
- NELAP Accrediting Authority Survey status.
- Annual regulatory survey - process and status.

Future Plans:

- Distribute annual regulatory survey to the NELAC BoD and standing committees as soon as possible.
- Evaluate and distribute the results of the NELAC Accrediting Authority survey.
- Prepare a formal proposal to INELA addressing what the Regulatory Coordination Committee could contribute to INELA.
  - Continue current information transmittal of federal and state regulations.
  - Comment on proposed federal and state regulations.
  - Market for NELAP accreditation and coordinate different state requirements for primary and secondary accreditation.

Unresolved Issues:

- Can the annual regulatory survey be sent to state accrediting authorities?
- Plan to improve the format and frequency of the regulatory survey.
- Committee status/functions within NELAC or INELA.

### **Membership and Outreach – Chair: Ms. Sherry Clay**

Ms. Clay was unable to attend the closing plenary session. In her absence, the Membership and Outreach Committee's summary was presented by Ms. Elaine Sorbet of the Louisiana Department of



Environmental Quality. She noted that an article had been published in American Laboratory News on the restructuring of NELAC and that the first "NELAC 101" had been presented at NELAC 8i. NELAC 101 received a positive response, especially from small laboratories. After noting that the Membership and Outreach Committee needs new members, Ms. Sorbet presented the following future plans:

- Continue with NELAC 101 at all NELAC meetings.
- Prepare fact sheets for registration packets at future meetings ("Benefits of NELAC").
- Present a "train the trainer" class ("NELAC for Dummies") to train state representatives to train other people in their own local areas.
  - Benefits of NELAC.
  - How to become a NELAP-accredited laboratory.
- Identify organizations and trade publications that use environmental data.
  - Provide conference exhibits.
  - Submit articles to trade journals.

#### **National Database: Mr. Matt Caruso**

Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- No progress in the development of the national database.
- EPA's current budget for the database has been exhausted.
- The original contractor has lost its resident expertise.

Future Plans:

- EPA is soliciting bids from two existing EPA contractors to finish the database.
- Accrediting authorities are displeased with delays and want the committee to investigate alternatives such as issuing a revised requirements document so private contractors could estimate costs and seek grant funding. (Mr. Caruso noted that there is a need for the exchange of accreditation information. He also noted that he heard no objection during the committee meeting to having the database reside on a non-government system.)

Unresolved Issues:

- Where database will ultimately reside.
- Initial and ongoing funding.

#### **ELAB – Chair: Ms. Zonetta English**

Highlights and Substantive Issues:

- Resolution to be developed: recommendation from ELAB to EPA that the agency's offices endorse NELAC.
- Workgroup to develop new proposed charter.
- Formal business proposal to request from EPA funds to support administrative functions of ELAB.

Future Plans:

- Proactively pursue responses to outstanding ELAB recommendations.
- Integrate all resolutions into formal written recommendations to EPA.
- Workgroup to collect information as to whether environmental laboratory accreditation is an inherently governmental function.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY SESSION**

Following the summary presentations by each of the committee chairs, Dr. Kimsey thanked the committee chairs and the committees on behalf of the NELAC BoD. He noted that the Program Policy

and Structure and Transition Committees were on track toward the “new NELAC.” Dr. Kimsey also noted that the NELAC community (federal-state-commercial partnership) is responding to seemingly insurmountable problems with pragmatic solutions. He offered two examples: alternate vendor progress on the national database and continued progress on PBMS. Dr. Kimsey thanked the private sector for their input and their contributions to improve the NELAC Standard.

Dr. Kimsey stated that the NELAC BoD had met with Dr. Longest to initiate a dialog on the idea that accreditation is not an inherently governmental function. He noted that the BoD would take the lead on this issue and provide an update at NELAC 9.

Dr. Kimsey welcomed new members to NELAC. He characterized NELAC as a different kind of organization in which members can argue all day and still go out for dinner together at night. He thanked RTI for its meeting support, EPA for its support, and Ms. Giesler and the State of New Mexico for their work to host the meeting. Dr. Kimsey then turned the microphone over to Ms. Giesler.

Ms. Giesler thanked her assistants, Ms. Ortiz, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Kantor and the Las Vegas EPA staff, Ms. Hankins, RTI, and the hotel staff. She then made a presentation to Ms. Hankins.

### **Recognition of Ms. Hankins**

The Conference recognized Ms. Hankins for her many years of contribution to NELAC. In honor of Ms. Hankins’ retirement after 18 years with EPA, Ms. Giesler presented her with a Georgia O’Keefe print from the Georgia O’Keefe Museum in Santa Fe. Dr. Kimsey presented Ms. Hankins with a certificate of appreciation for her contribution to the advancement of NELAC and her personal dedication and commitment through the years. He also presented her with a small memento from his home state of California. Ms. Giesler characterized Ms. Hankins as “the glue that holds things together.” Ms. Hankins was moved by the presentation. She expressed her thanks for the gifts, but noted that the many friendships she had cultivated in NELAC were the greatest gift of all. Noting that NELAC has been her passion, Ms. Hankins wished NELAC the greatest success in the future. In response, she received a standing ovation from the attendees.

In closing, Dr. Kimsey extended a personal invitation to all in attendance to attend NELAC 9 in San Diego. NELAC 9 will be held June 2-6, 2003. There being no further business of the Conference, Dr. Kimsey adjourned the Eighth NELAC Interim meeting.